

What Will Be the

**THE AFFECT OF CURRENT TAXPAYER ATTITUDES ON THE ABILITY
OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO FUND ADDITIONAL HUMAN
RESOURCES IN THE FUTURE**

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this article is what will be the future impact of a contemporary trend, namely negative taxpayer attitudes, on the acquisition of human resources for a medium sized police agency. In particular, the impact on the Santa Maria Police Department. In researching this issue a number of questions pose themselves. Among these are, what will the role of a police officer/police department be in the future, what will the police organization look like in the future, will we still be hiring the traditional 20 to 30 year employee, can we sustain historical levels of sworn personnel growth and what type of funding sources will predominate in the future. As this article is being written, the philosophy of community oriented policing and problem solving is permeating the nation. While initial results seem to indicate great success in the reduction of the incidence of crime and the fear of crime and enhancement of the quality of life, it is at the same time labor intensive and service expansive. Indicative of contemporary police attitudes toward this topic is this statement from a recent issue of The Journal of California Law Enforcement. "Even though budgetary constraints are a way of life, police organizations compete only with other governmental agencies for resources. And as an essential public service, they usually are assured a subsistent revenue stream. So despite myriad calls to adopt business practices, become entrepreneurial, privatize, or create some form of competitive environment in relevant service areas, few feel compelled to change." ¹ Almost as if to mock this thought, another author in the same publication discussing the change to community policing comments, "Paramount to a successful change is understanding and embracing a new paradigm for

policing; a paradigm which is inclusive and proactive, which teaches the skills of facilitation, team building and group dynamics, and which takes the approach that in order to be successful peacekeepers we must provide the community with quality police service." ²

In comparing these statements one might conclude that this new paradigm has apparently overlooked the economic aspects of delivering police services. If the first author is correct, why should we be concerned about resource allocation? An article in Western City magazine makes the reason clear. "Since 1984, spending per capita on police services by cities has increased nearly 40 percent, **after adjusting for inflation.**" ³ At the present time we seem to be locked into a cycle of decreasing or static revenues and increasing demands for service. Even in the best case situation where revenues are increasing, they do not keep pace with the demand for increased services. Added to this scenario are taxpayers who want increased service levels without increased taxes or user fees. They believe this to be possible because they tend to view government as inept, wasteful and in some cases outright corrupt.

HISTORY

In the several decades preceding the 1990s, Cities in general, and Police Departments in particular, had become accustomed to regular, incremental increases in funding and human resources. This condition, although by no means universal, was common in much of urban California. As a result, a sense of complacency and comfort dominated police management as the new decade unfolded. This was, however, to be short lived. Early in the new decade

a major recession settled over the nation. Unlike recent previous periods of economic downturn, California was not spared the pain and loss. In fact, the recession in California was deeper and longer than that experienced in the rest of the country. The "golden state", which had enjoyed virtually uninterrupted decades of growth and prosperity, was to be in for a serious dose of economic reality. In an article in the Economist entitled "California Mark IV" the process that occurred was described this way. "For the fourth time in the past 150 years, California is remaking itself. After the gold rush, the oil gush and the defence boom, here comes knowledge-intensive employment." ⁴ The new businesses that are forming encompass telecommunications, medical equipment, international trade and entertainment. On the other side of the ledger, California has seen 43,000 corporate entities from the old guard disappear from the landscape.

Although the concept of taxpayer revolt is as old as time, it is only recently in modern times that its full effects have come home to roost. We can look to biblical records and the american revolution for examples of taxpayer revolt. The modern chapter in the saga of negative taxpayer attitudes in California began in 1978 with the passage of Proposition 13. This landmark vote had a profound impact on taxation as it pertained to real property. In the short term the dire predictions of disaster for local government did not materialize, however, the die was cast on an era. In the book Down From Bureaucracy Joel Handler remarks on Proposition 13 in this manner, "The taxpayers revolt - which shows no signs of abating soon - plus national and state deficits have resulted in a significant downward flow of governmental authority." ⁵ These forces, which taxpayer attitudes have set in motion

and negative economic conditions exacerbate, gave birth to the technique known as unfunded mandates. This practice is a direct result of the unwillingness of politicians to increase taxes. This ultimates in higher levels of government pushing responsibility for government activities to the local level without the provision of adequate fiscal resources to accomplish the task. In the same book Handler notes, "More and more public activities are being carried out at the local level, and indeed local taxes are increasing." ⁶ In response to this tactic, angry taxpayers recently passed Proposition 218. This vote nullified all previous tax and fee increases not adopted by vote of the affected electorate as required by a previous ballot proposition that local governments narrowly interpreted. In addition, local governments over the last several years have increased user fees for all manner of services and instituted utility and other specialized taxes. The full affect of this most recent action has yet to be felt. There are, however, vivid signs of its potential impact. Special taxes initiated in local communities are being overturned by the courts and voters, with resultant revenue decreases causing, in some cases, layoffs and other budget slashing maneuvers.

If that was not enough, local governments have been plagued with demands for funding of quasi-public facilities such as sports stadiums. The scenario goes something like this. A national sports franchise threatens to move it's team to a competing community if local government does not fund a new or renovated facility. This frightens politicians who see potential revenue leaving the community and angers taxpayers who feel they are being blackmailed. A recent issue of Forbes magazine chronicled just such an incident. Alex

Spanos, the owner of the National Football League team, the Chargers, began threatening the City of San Diego with the removal of his team to another town. The Mayor and City Council offered a \$60 million renovation to Jack Murphy Stadium. That was not good enough for Spanos who declined the offer. City fathers countered with an additional \$18 million and a guarantee of an average 60,000 tickets per game for ten years. Enraged local taxpayers sued to halt construction and place the issue on the ballot as a local referendum. Local polls showed the measure being defeated by a 4 to 1 margin. Undaunted, the mayor and city council went ahead with renovations without holding the referendum. A local judge will soon make a decision on the lawsuit filed by taxpayers, which will determine whether or not construction can continue.⁷ Such an example, although probably not the norm, makes it easier to understand the attitude of taxpayers and what fuels them. In a more familiar context, local businesses threaten to move jobs out of local communities, counties and/or states and then demand concessions in the form of tax breaks and other special treatment. This all has the net affect of reducing revenue and/or increasing costs.

As this drama has unfolded over the years, the issue of privatization has become a frequently recommended solution to the woes of local government. The dichotomy presented by these factors was clearly expressed in the book Privatizing the United States Justice System which noted, "Municipal governments have experienced a period of adjustment and retrenchment as taxpayers have demanded that taxes be reduced without sacrifices in service quality."⁸ Later in the same book, Roland Dart talks specifically about law enforcement, saying "It is contended that the imbalance between demand for police

services and available economic resources will increase in the future."⁹ This dichotomy of shrinking, stagnant or sluggish revenues and rapidly expanding demands for service is the driving force behind the issue being explored in this paper.

As would be expected, the proponents of public law enforcement are outraged at the prospect of privatizing policing. This view is expressed in the book Privatization and the Welfare State in these words, "...provision of the policing services on a collective but not public good basis undermines some of the key requirements placed on public policing, particularly impartiality, equality of provision and public accountability." ¹⁰ Presenting the other end of the spectrum, the authors note "In thinking about privatization, therefore, it is important to note that it is the function - law enforcement and community protection - that is necessarily public, not existing institutional and organizational arrangements." ¹¹ What the authors are suggesting is that the responsibility and accountability for policing may rightly be public trusts, but the methodology of accomplishing those tasks can take many forms. Government employees are not the only legitimate means of delivering such services. This pronouncement frightens politicians and public employees alike. In the case of politicians, they fear losing power and control. Public employees fear loss of jobs and the diminution of wages and benefits. The local community also has a legitimate concern in this area. If the means of providing for public safety is privatized, does this create a situation where the economically advantaged receive a higher level of service than those unable to pay? Conceivably, well to do neighborhoods could afford increased levels of protection, based on a means test, while economically disadvantaged neighborhoods get what is left.

Now that we have identified the issue, perhaps we should define the theory more fully. The term privatization is frequently used to cover a wide variety of concepts. A broad definition from Across the Board states, "Privatization is what you get when the public sector applies private sector techniques to traditionally public-sector problems ...".¹² An article in Business Horizons magazine refers to four common forms of privatization:

"Divestiture - the selling or closing down of state-owned enterprises;

User Charges - raising the fees charged to users of public services;

Private provision of services - allowing the private sector to provide services, either in place of or in competition with government; and

Contracting out - government contracting of service delivery to private firms."¹³

With the recent recovery of the economy, grant funding, especially from the federal level, has increased markedly. In many cases, significant levels of human resources have been added to police agencies under a plethora of COPS related grants. At the moment this seems to provide a short term solution to the question of how to fund increased human resource needs. However, if history teaches us anything, it is that what the economic winds bestow they can also take away. It would be foolish to believe that the current level of grant funding will be a long term source of funding. The good news about current levels of grant funding also contains the seeds of its demise. The issue of matching funds and the eventual retention of grant funded positions looms large on the horizon. In fact, the evidence of that view is starting to surface even now. An article in Law Enforcement News encapsulates the

issue. The City of Toledo, Ohio availed themselves of federal COPS funding to add up to 100 personnel to their Police Department. After committing to the program, the City's financial condition took a turn for the worse in the form of lower than expected revenues. The City now faces the prospect of returning \$7.6 million in COPS grants if they cannot find matching funds and produce a viable a plan to retain personnel hired under the program. ¹⁴ This has long been an expressed concern of the Santa Maria City Council, who favor using grants for technology and other one time expenditures, as opposed to adding personnel with grant money.

In an attempt to bring all of this information we have just explored into focus, it might be useful to look at a case study. The July 20, 1997 issue of the San Jose Mercury News provides just such an opportunity. Although the extremes presented by the City of East Palo Alto probably will not occur to all of us, it clearly illustrates the issues we are investigating in this paper. About five years ago East Palo Alto had the dubious distinction, at a mere 25,000 population, of being named the murder capital of the country. Revelations followed about mismanagement, personnel problems, inadequate human resources and fiscal difficulties, particularly a salary level 37% less than comparable agencies in the bay area. As a means of solving these problems, many neighboring agencies pitched in with loans of personnel and expertise. Another aspect of the solution was the enactment of a parcel tax. These actions brought a temporary fix to the problem. Recently, however, assisting agencies had to withdraw their support. internal personnel problems persisted, a federal grant ran out and the parcel tax was invalidated. The solution to this dilemma, as proposed by the City,

is the passage of a Police Tax on the local ballot. It is doubtful that the \$900,000 tax will correct all of the problems being faced.¹⁵ A follow-up article on July 23, 1997 reported that the tax was rejected by voters, gaining only 59% of the needed 66.6% margin. Despite dire predictions of a return to horrendous crime rates of the past, 41% of the voters opposed a tax increase.¹⁶ This result, in an obviously dire situation, points out the depth of taxpayer discontent in local communities. It is easy for less troubled communities to feel that this cannot happen to them. Even if that were currently true, it only takes one of the negative events depicted in the foregoing story on East Palo Alto to impact revenues and ultimately service levels.

FINDINGS

In order to make sense of the myriad factors affecting this issue and to develop a systematic plan for creating and managing a desirable future, it is essential that future trends and events be identified. The process chosen to accomplish this task was the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The Nominal Group is a small group technique designed to provide informed input on a specific issue. It does this by generating large numbers of ideas in a non-judgmental setting, utilizing a diverse group of subject matter experts. After generating the ideas, the panel reaches a consensus on how identified trends and events should be ranked. In this particular case, the panel was composed of law enforcement executives and middle managers, a personnel specialist and the City Librarian. The specific issue statement given to the panel was "What will be the impact of taxpayer attitudes on human resources

acquisition at the Santa Maria Police Department by the year 2002?" The panel identified and ranked ten (10) trends and ten (10) events they felt were crucial to this issue.

The panel identified a public fear of violent crime as the most important trend affecting this issue. Closely associated with this trend is the incidence of gang activity. This was identified as the number two trend. The panel felt that these two trends would have the most profound affect on taxpayer reluctance to fund police services. Obviously these are negative trends and are closely allied to local demographics. The City of Santa Maria is a central coast community of approximately 70,000 population and a service population over 100,000. The community is predominantly minority, with hispanics and asians composing about 55% of the population. Economically, agriculture and retail sales are the leading industries. In proportion to the size of the community, there is a large gang presence dating back over several generations. The panel felt that these trends, together with ethnic diversity and drug crime victimization, provided a basis for counteracting taxpayer negativity.

Conversely, the panel identified availability of revenues, the local economy and the local tax base as trends that could aggravate negative taxpayer attitudes. The local general fund receives the largest portion of it's revenue from sales tax. This was a conscious decision made by elected officials a decade ago when Santa Maria had the lions share of the major retail outlets in a two county area. Over the years, however, other communities have added retail capacity. Also, needless to say, the ups and downs of the economy over the last five

years has played havoc with sales tax revenues. These factors, combined with unexpected expenses such as state water and the forced closure of a landfill site have weakened once rock solid municipal finances.

In addition to the trends already enumerated, the panel identified a series of specific incidents (events) that could either positively or negatively impact the subject issue. On the negative side of the ledger, the panel cited events such as a high profile gang incident or a very high profile crime involving a sexual predator, new state mandated shifts of revenue, the election of an anti- growth/anti-business council majority, a court decision which decreases the incidence of incarceration of offenders and passage of a bond issue for cultural arts/library spending. The use of the terms positive and negative in reference to these events is subjective at best. The previously stated events are negative in their affect on the community, however, they would most likely have a positive affect on police funding. While such an outcome would be positive in a funding sense, it carries serious ethical and professional connotations. It is clear from historical data that fear is a short term motivator, however, the so-called beneficial results last only as long as the crisis is fresh in memory. When it has passed, a backlash frequently occurs.

On the other side of the ledger, the panel identified several positive events. These include passage of a public safety assessment fee or utility tax, annexation of contiguous county areas and successful commercialization of the Vandenburg, AFB spaceport. These events would have positive economic impacts without the previously noted side effects. The other

event identified by the panel is the hiring of a new Police Chief. The long term impacts of that event are an unknown quantity until the event occurs. Typically, however, there is a so-called honeymoon period where there is a short term window for improving staffing levels and/or purchasing equipment.

The ultimate result of this process was the creation of a series of three fictional scenarios based on the trends and events identified by the panel. The three scenarios are classified as "most desirable", "least desirable" and "most likely". All of the scenarios are set in January of the year 2000 and depict conditions at that point in time. These scenarios provide a platform from which to create a plan for managing a desired future. Again, it is important to note that the labels of positive and negative are subjective.

In the least desirable scenario taxpayer attitudes remain staunchly negative, voters resist any hint of tax or fee increases, community outlook is one of satisfaction with the status quo, city staffing remains lean and mean, crime has continued to increase moderately, the economy has taken a turn for the worse and the city remains pro-growth/pro-business. Projected onto this picture is an event of serious proportions. A gang shooting occurs in the downtown mall resulting in the deaths of three gang members and two bystanders, an infant child and a high school cheerleader. Several others are injured. The result of this situation is large scale public and media outcry over inadequate police staffing. In short order a public safety assessment fee is passed and twenty new officers are hired. While the ultimate outcome achieves the desired end, the means of its coming to pass are unthinkable.

In the most desirable scenario the state legislature stops tinkering with local revenue sources and they stabilize, significant expansion of the tax base has occurred through commercialization of space ventures at Vandenburg AFB and the attraction of several major business ventures to the community, crime continues an uninterrupted downturn, positive community activism is widespread, there is strong community support for increased police staffing and active privatization of city services has left a larger slice of the general fund pie for law enforcement. In this environment taxpayer attitudes soften and funding for police services is no longer an issue. This of course is a very positive, although unlikely, scenario.

Having looked at the two extremes, we are left with a most likely scenario. In this case the economy continues its historic pattern of cyclicity at moderate levels, community support is good, except when it comes to additional taxes and/or fees, the tax base continues to expand at a modest level, personnel costs remain high, automation retards the need for additional sworn and civilian staffing and taxpayer attitudes remain basically negative. The negativity of taxpayer attitudes is fueled by voter distrust of elected officials at all levels. In short, the dilemma of how to finance additional human resources remains intact.

Given that the most likely scenario is the basis for much of what follows, I am including it in its entirety at this point for the convenience of the reader.

MOST LIKELY FUTURE SCENARIO

It is early in January in the year 2000. The City has enjoyed celebrating the new century and the new millennium. The community mood is generally very positive. There is, however, an undercurrent of distrust toward elected officials at all levels. This distrust translates into a continued negativity toward increased taxes and/or fees. The economy has continued its historically cyclical nature and is experiencing a moderate downturn at this time. The competition for new industry on the central coast is heated and the City has won a few and lost a few in terms of attracting new business enterprises.

The community has continued to grow at a modest rate and revenue growth has just about kept pace with the need for expanded service engendered by population growth. Our elected officials have continued in the pro-business/pro-growth mode and continue to advocate lean and mean staffing. The Police Department continues to enjoy a strong positive relationship in the community. The advent of a cohesive technology plan has held the need to add human resources at a low level. In fact, the department has just been able to retain the eleven (11) grant funded positions added to the organization in the late 1990's and add a very few new positions. The availability of state and federal grants has diminished and elected officials are hesitant to authorize them based on the difficulty experienced in retaining previous grant funded positions.

The decreasing crime trends of the last few years of the previous decade have finally begun to abate and a new cycle of moderate increase is underway. The philosophy of Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving has led to increased service level expectations, mostly composed of non-traditional types of activities. These are time consuming and require higher levels of human resources. All of these factors have combined to produce an urgent need for additional personnel. The community and elected officials support these increases but are adverse to any increased taxation or user fees to fund them.

The old dilemmas are intact and the time seems ripe for a total reevaluation of the status quo.

Although these scenarios are fictional, there is every reason to believe that the most likely future depicted above will be a fairly accurate representation of conditions over the next five years. This provides us a base upon which to evaluate current assumptions about staffing needs and a platform for designing a strategic plan for defining and managing the desired future.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

If we accept the concept that a strategic plan, in its simplest form, is a blueprint for managing a desired future, it becomes relatively simple to develop, implement and execute such a plan. If we approach it as an academic exercise, it becomes onerous and frustrating. In thinking about the issue at hand, future funding of human resources, several options suggest themselves. Among the familiar, and in many cases little used, options are regionalization, privatization, organizational restructuring, automation and grant funding.

Regionalization is a method of combining the resources of several smaller agencies into a single larger organization. In this concept administrative and support services, or even entire functions or agencies, are combined into a more efficient single unit with a net reduction of human resources by eliminating duplication and administrative overhead. This can be done with entire police agencies or with individual functions such as communications, purchasing, records or personnel administration. Many small and medium sized agencies struggle to perform many of these tasks with allotted personnel and/or do not do them

frequently enough to become efficient and effective. In many cases one individual can wear multiple hats. Many small agencies combine records and communications into a single position and personnel, purchasing and other administrative functions into another. This use of cross discipline positions has significant potential for limiting the persons ability to master a given function. While the theory of regionalization has much to commend it, both operationally and economically, it can be politically infeasible. Many small communities are unwilling to let go of local control, especially where it concerns law enforcement. It has, however, been successfully accomplished in some localities such as Dade County, Florida and Las Vegas, Nevada, especially when driven by critical issues such as corruption, extreme mismanagement and/or economic hardship.

In an article called "Can Police Services Be Privatized?", Philip Fixler and Robert Poole note "The major barriers to police privatization include tradition and attitudes, concern about control and accountability, union opposition, legal restrictions, and the difficulty of encouraging all beneficiaries to finance these services voluntarily, or privately." ¹⁷ Simplistically speaking, the services provided by a police organization can be divided into public and private goods. A public good is one provided collectively to the community without regard to who pays the cost. A classic example of a public good is national defense. Public goods, are traditionally produced in the public sector and funded by taxation. A private good, by definition, is one consumed individually and available only to those who pay for it. The traditional view is that law enforcement falls solidly into the category of public

goods. There are, however, many services that are more closely allied to the private goods definition, except that they are funded at least partially by taxation. These would include vacation house checks, police escorts for funerals etc., traffic direction at construction sites and alarm response. The questions to be asked in such cases relate to charging for such services and/or having them performed by non-sworn personnel or privatizing them altogether.

In considering the role of grant funding, its availability, costs of assumption, limitation/oversight and longevity are essential issues. At the present time the climate for grant funding is ideal and monies are readily available. This has not always been the case and probably will not be in the future if history is any judge. Grant funding tends to be dependent on economic and political conditions, has questionable stability, comes with varying levels of strings attached and, as with many quick fixes, has long term liabilities that can be minimized or ignored at the front end of the process. In the case of the Santa Maria Police Department, the City Council has expressed concern over the issue of assumption of costs after grant funding expires. The Santa Maria Police Department currently has, or will acquire, eleven (11) grant funded positions. All of these grants will expire within approximately a two year window. There is serious concern about the ability of the city to fund them all independent of grant monies.

With the advent of the new millennium, automation is being touted as the panacea for public and private sector alike. In addition, we will likely face an eventual transition to a

paperless criminal justice system. There is no doubt that automation technology has tremendous potential for all of us. The trick is not to get caught up in the euphoria of technological advances. Rather, we must make critical assessments and construct cohesive information technology plans. Once any entity becomes dependent on a technology it can become the victim of a ruthless master. Human skills can be lost, endless issues of compatibility, and updating and enhancing can be costly in both human and economic terms and cycles of obsolescence get smaller and smaller. As a profession, we have all gone our separate ways when it comes to the adoption of technology. Some day we may have to pay the price for this lack of foresight. In Santa Barbara County each of the major law enforcement agencies across the criminal justice system has adopted different technology for information processing. Even various departments within county government have gone separate paths.

Finally, we must look at the composition of the police department and the law enforcement profession of the future, which I refer to as restructuring. Specifically, the mix of sworn and civilian personnel and the functions performed by each, the role of law enforcement in the community, the relationships of private enterprise to local, county, state and federal agencies and how they should be structured, realigned and/or consolidated and so forth. If we accept the axiom that change is the only constant in organizations, it would be foolish to believe that we can enter the future with the structure, philosophy and values of the past. We cannot hope for success in the future, if we leave the process to chance.

THE RECOMMENDED STRATEGY

In the course of my research and in discussion with stakeholders and fellow practitioners, it becomes clear that there is no normative answer to the issue being faced. A single best solution for a complex problem is probably not even desirable. In fact, the answer may well be that the issue is improperly stated because it inadvertently suggests a continuation of the status quo. Therefore, the recommended strategy is a conglomeration of approaches designed to bring together the disparate components of this issue and produce a multifaceted, yet cohesive, resolution. For lack of a better term, I call the strategy reinventing the police service. The goal is to take apart all of the component pieces of the issue, evaluate them on as non-confrontational a basis as possible and reassemble them in a form more suited to the future as we would like it to be. This may include adopting new strategies and reducing or eliminating others.

The first step in the process is to conduct an assessment of the role of law enforcement in the community as it pertains to the type and cost of services to be provided. This will require bringing together residents from all sections of the community, elected/appointed officials, police management, the police officers association, the business community, special interest groups and any other interested stakeholders. This step will entail a series of meetings with the various groups to identify and prioritize the services most important to them. Thereafter, a group meeting(s) can be held to merge the results into a single document. This meeting will also serve to identify the level of cost acceptable to the

community for these services.

The second step in this process is to define what the essential elements of the role of a sworn officer should be in the future. Inherent in this process, is the defining of the potential complementary role of civilian service providers and alternative hiring options such as a military style short term enlistment. In principle, we will be determining what functions require the authority, training, expertise and expense of a career police officer. Only then will it be possible to determine the ratio of sworn to civilian personnel and/or short term employees and the attendant cost factors involved. These assessments will be made by a group composed of police officers, supervisors, management and civilian personnel with appropriate community input.

The third step will be the formulation of a long range information technology plan for the Police Department. This will include investigating, assessing and integrating the most efficient and cost effective technologies for supporting the delivery of police services. These could include CAD, management information systems, geomapping, fingerprint and photo imaging technologies and case management. A group, consisting of users, systems personnel, finance and management, will conduct the assessment, identify the costs of acquisition, maintenance, upgrading and replacement over a five year time frame, investigate interface issues within the city and with other government agencies and recommend a department wide plan.

The final step in the process will include costing out all of the various components of the strategy and then determining what combination of city general funds, grants, privatization, service decreases or deletions, automation, internal realignment and regionalization will coincide with available fiscal resources. This is not to infer that all of these options will necessarily be utilized, just that they will be factored into the final equation. This step will be accomplished by police management in concert with city finance and management personnel and ratified by our elected officials.

Once the plan is in place, it will need to be reviewed periodically by police management, elected officials and the public. This can probably best be accomplished by an annual report prepared by police management, followed by its public review as a council agenda item. This will permit both council review and a public hearing for community input. Based on the input received, necessary adjustments can be made to keep the plan current.

The following is a summary of the strategic plan:

1. Define the desired future in concert with all involved stakeholders.
2. Complete a community based assessment of the desired role of law enforcement in the future.
3. Define the future role of career sworn personnel.
4. Complete a comprehensive five year information technology plan.

5. Complete a cost/benefit analysis of the various strategies of policing.
6. Feedback/Adjustment.

TRANSITION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The strategy being proposed is comprehensive, radical and broad based. Successful execution of the plan will require a skillful, visionary, well communicated approach. It is the nature of organizations, and those that compose them, to resist change. Change signifies that positions and values that members of the organization are comfortable with will be altered. In many cases, this produces a negative perception of the change process. During change there is a high level of perceived inconsistency, stress levels are elevated, conflict increases, the wagons are circled and the good old days syndrome comes to the surface. It will not be any different in the case at hand. It would be logical to expect a significant level of resistance from the police officers bargaining unit, as well as increased participation by the bargaining unit for civilian employees. It is also prudent to expect resistance from city personnel and finance employees due to the increased workload this would mean for them. This does not even take into account the vast educational process that will be required to communicate the final product to community members and elected officials.

The first step in managing change is defining the desired result. It will be the job of the Chief of Police and his management team to clearly articulate the vision and values of the strategic plan. This entails communicating a complete word picture of where the

organization wants to get to. In order to cope with organizational concerns over change the vision must be clear and inspired. Members of the organization must be provided enough information to envision the future. There cannot be too much information provided. Overkill is the desired state of affairs. Management must be ruthlessly consistent in their articulation of the vision. It must be repeated and reinforced constantly. Management must be visible and available during the entire process. They must also perform damage/rumor control, emphasize teamwork and respond to concerns. In order to accomplish this task, the management team must come to a consensus of what the vision is and how it will be implemented. This will be accomplished through a facilitated team building process. Once management is clear on what is to be done, a series of formal and informal meetings with all stakeholders and work units can be commenced. This process should start with the police officers association and proceed to individual work groups.

The next step is to identify the current state of the organizational culture. This will include determining areas of support and resistance. Management can then build on the former and address the latter. In short, this entails, for lack of a better term, an intelligence gathering process by members of the management team in the course of sharing the vision within the department. Once areas of support and resistance are identified a plan can be formulated for further action.

The actual work of implementing the strategic plan is a process of building commitment in

the organization, identifying the management team that will carry out the plan, creating the necessary systems and processes and setting objectives and timetables. Once these steps are determined they must be clearly communicated throughout the organization, progress must be closely monitored and necessary modifications made as developments occur. In the course of this process, those individuals who are responding positively and setting the example must be publically recognized and commended.

Restructuring the Santa Maria Police Department to meet the challenges of the new century, in a way that is supported by elected and appointed officials and the community at-large, is a task of monumental proportions. It will require total commitment, dedication and effort on the part of the entire organization. No major change is implemented without pain, resistance and a learning process. The strength of the vision, and those who carry it, must be of the highest order.

The following is a summary of the Transition Management Plan:

1. Conduct Management team/consensus building on the desired future.
2. Communicate the vision and values of the desired future effectively.
3. Identify areas of support and resistance in the organization.
4. Appoint project managers for the transition.
5. Implement the strategic plan.
6. Monitor/Adjust.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

If we accept the premise that the essence of leadership is the ability to be visionary, then this issue poses a critical challenge to the leaders of this or any department. It requires questioning some of the most sacred beliefs of the law enforcement profession and, if necessary, casting them onto the scrap heap of history. The concept that functions traditionally performed by police officers can be privatized and/or civilianized, that local control of police agencies, or functions thereof, should be assumed by new or existing regional entities and that we should collaborate on decisions goes to the core of our organizational being. Presenting such ideas can be a high risk venture, actually proposing to implement them could subject the individual to a significant possibility of being professionally censured. Taking a leadership position under these conditions will require a level of courage few possess.

One of the other issues facing leadership is the need to maintain a futuristic outlook. Just recognizing the problems of today and the potential impact of such issues is not enough. If we look at future problems with today's solutions in the back of our mind we set ourselves up to fail. Another leadership issue is the need for a community focus. Law enforcement leaders are conditioned to focus on internal professional and labor issues. The essence of a successful resolution of the issue at hand is a focus on what the community perceives as the proper role and focus of law enforcement. It is easy to give lip service to this concept

and quite another to actually give it a place in the process. Hand in hand with these issues is the ability to communicate skillfully, not only within the organization but with the community at-large. The ability to do this requires empathy. If we cannot put ourselves in the other stakeholders position mentally we will not be speaking the same language and cannot reach consensus. Leadership will also need a high degree of flexibility and political awareness. The number and import of the factors involved in this issue are enormous.

The issues that will have to be dealt with will come from within and without. Internally, the officers and their bargaining unit will be very resistant to anything that would portend a reduction in ranks, what they might perceive as diminished responsibility and the potential formation of a lesser classification of sworn officer, such as a military style commitment. The leadership of the organization will have a big job on their hands when it comes to selling the envisioned concept to all members of the organization. Externally, varying political positions, private sector competition and fluctuating economic conditions will provide a full plate for department leaders. The levels of stress and conflict a change of this magnitude could produce are unprecedented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to achieve a successful resolution of the issue before us, a few key points will need to be adhered to. They include:

1. Start early and often to champion the need for addressing this issue.

2. Identify and include all potential stakeholders.
3. Seek broad consensus on the Strategic Plan.
4. Maintain open communication within the organization and with stakeholders and elected and appointed officials.
5. Personal agendas and preferred outcomes must be put aside.
6. Openness to new ideas and flexibility are key to a successful outcome.
7. Appoint persons with high levels of credibility with stakeholders to facilitate meetings.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of studying this issue and going through the process we have outlined for its resolution is to provide the organization with the ability to manage a desired future. We have all become at least quasi-experts in the sport of crisis management. One would think that going through that gut wrenching, frustrating and often fruitless exercise would drive us to finding a better way to do business. Apparently, however, we must enjoy the thrill of the sporting event, for we repeat it over and over.

The law enforcement profession gives much lip service to the idea of a futures oriented outlook, but we seem to practice precious little of it. Although there are some revolutionary examples of a new perspective, such as community oriented policing and problem solving, most of our approach to the future is a repackaging of the past. In fact, some would argue,

and with much factual support, that community policing is merely a return to the roots of policing. It is very common today to question the reasons for a particular practice and receive a response on the order of, we do it because we have always done it that way. All too often that answer is accepted by police executives. We talk about the future in academic settings. Back at the work place, we still deal very much in the past and the present. Hopefully, issues such as this one will be the catalyst for real change.

In the very beginning of this process we asked several important questions. They included:

1. What will be the role of the police officer/police department in the future?
2. What will the police organization look like in the future?
3. Will we still be hiring the traditional 20-30 year employee?
4. Can we sustain historical levels of sworn personnel growth?
5. What type of funding sources will predominate in the future?

While I do not believe that we came to specific detailed answers in each case, we did identify trends and, most importantly, a mechanism for reaching the answers that are needed has been established. As far as the police officer and police department of the future are concerned, I feel it is safe to conclude that they will be more individualized to the needs of the community they serve. This is also the case of the organizational structure. Additionally, I believe that the ratio of sworn to civilian personnel will come nearer equilibrium. As far as the traditional 20-30 year employee, they will still exist but may well be supplemented by other short term alternatives. In considering the pattern of historical

personnel growth, we can already detect a slowing of this trend, which will likely continue and intensify. The future of funding sources is probably the most difficult to determine but I feel safe in saying that it will be altered from what we know today and will be dependent on the partnerships we build with our communities today.

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LEAST DESIRABLE SCENARIO

David N. Stern
Command College - Class #24

It is early in January in the year 2000. The City of Santa Maria has just wound up several days of celebrating the new century and millennium. The mood is cautious, the local economy has taken a turn for the worse, crime has risen measurably each year, significant growth has taken place, several highly sought after commercial ventures have just declined to select Santa Maria as their new home and the long anticipated commercialization of space ventures at Vandenburg AFB has started to come apart at the seams.

Because the community has grown but not prospered over the last several years, the Police Department continues to lag behind, lulled by the fact that crime is confined to certain neighborhoods, strong community orientation and a relatively positive outlook on the response to crime. The City's philosophy of a lean and mean staff throughout the City also appeals to local taxpayers and small business people. The City Council has continued to be pro-growth/pro-business and resists tax and/or fee increases. The City has cautiously explored the privatization of public service in areas such as fleet maintenance and trash collection but has not acted as yet.

Although the community has a long cyclical history of gang violence, it has rarely spilled outside of the various combatant groups. This first full weekend of the new year, however, has altered that situation forever. At 3 PM on a busy Saturday afternoon at the Town Center Mall, rival gangs from Santa Maria and Guadalupe opened fire on each other in the center court of the mall. The result of this confrontation was three gang members dead and several more seriously wounded. That, however, pales in significance in comparison to the two bystanders killed and four wounded. The dead were an infant child of a local business owner and a high school cheerleader and honor student. The wounded included shoppers and employees of tenant businesses in the mall.

Immediately following this incident, and for weeks afterward, local and network media had a field day speculating on the deficiencies of the police, elected officials and City policy on staffing. They also contacted the CEO's of the new business ventures contemplating relocation to town and broadcast their resolve to rethink those moves. Local support groups formed around the victims, outraged citizens overwhelmed City staff with correspondence and demands for information and beleaguered elected officials tried to defend their strategy. The Police Department stayed on the sidelines as much as possible and as a result escaped much of the blame being leveled at the City.

At the next regular council meeting demands for vastly increased police staffing seemed endless. Concerns about increased taxes evaporated and in short order a public safety assessment fee passed with heavy voter support. In short order twenty new officers were hired and the City declared war on gang violence.

MOST DESIRABLE SCENARIO

David N. Stern
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It is early in January in the year 2000. The City of Santa Maria has just wound up several days of celebrating the new century and millennium. The mood is jubilant, the local economy is at its best level in many years, crime has continued its long term downward trend, significant growth has taken place, several highly sought after commercial ventures have just selected Santa Maria as their new home and the long anticipated commercialization of space ventures at Vandenburg AFB has started to come on line.

While the community has grown and prospered over the last several years, the Police Department continues to lag behind, lulled by prosperity, strong community orientation and a relatively positive outlook on crime. The City's philosophy of a lean and mean staff throughout the City also appeals to local taxpayers and small business people. The City Council has continued to be pro-growth/pro-business and resists tax and/or fee increases. The City has aggressively ventured into privatization of public service in areas such as fleet maintenance, trash collection, parks and recreation and road maintenance. This has caused a reduction in overall expenditures from the general fund.

On the local level public activism on behalf of increased police staffing is strong and frequent as a result of the positive results of the department's Community Oriented policing and Problem Solving philosophy. The inclusion of all interested stakeholders into the business of crime prevention and policing in general has reaped dividends beyond even the most optimistic projections. The community is united in the effort to improve the quality of life in Santa Maria.

On the state level the legislature has a majority favoring stable local revenue sources. At their most recent session, constitutional amendments were enacted prohibiting tinkering with sales taxes and other traditional local revenue sources. This action has encouraged both local politicians and taxpayers.

As a result of the total current environment, taxpayer attitudes have softened, additional funding for police officers easily passed through the City Council and the issue of funding for police resources has become a non-issue.

MOST LIKELY SCENARIO

David N. Stern
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It is early in January in the year 2000. The City has enjoyed celebrating the new century and the new millennium. The mood of the community is generally very positive. There is, however, an undercurrent of distrust aimed at elected officials at all levels. This distrust translates into a continued negativity toward increased taxes and/or fees. The economy has continued in its historically cyclical nature and is experiencing a moderate downturn at this time. The competition for new industry on the central coast is heated and the City has won a few and lost a few in terms of attracting new business enterprises.

The community has continued to grow at a modest rate and revenue growth has just about kept pace with the need for expanded service engendered by population growth. Our elected officials have continued to exhibit pro-growth/pro-business tendencies. They also continue to favor lean and mean staffing for City departments. The Police Department continues to enjoy a strong positive relationship with the community. The advent of a cohesive technology plan has held the need for additional human resources at a low level. In fact, the department has been able to retain most of the eleven (11) grant funded positions added to the organization in the late 1990s. Otherwise, few new positions have been authorized. The availability of state and federal grant funding has diminished and elected officials are hesitant to authorize them based on the difficulty experienced in retention of previous grant funded positions.

The decreasing crime trends of the last years of the twentieth century have finally begun to abate and a new cycle of moderate increase is underway. The philosophy of Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving has led to increased service level expectations, composed mostly of non-traditional types of activities. These tend to be time consuming and require higher levels of human resources. All of these factors have combined to produce an urgent need for additional personnel. The community and our elected officials acknowledge and support, in principle, the need to increase staffing. They are, however, averse to increased taxation or user fees to fund them.

It seems that the old dilemma is intact and the time may be right for a total reevaluation of the status quo.